

others who have some persuasive powers in their ability to move this matter.

For clarification with respect to my colloquy with the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania, we are ready to send to the House all three components of the Senate amendment to H.R. 7, the version of S. 476, as passed the Senate, the Snowe-Lincoln child tax credit piece, and the Grassley-Baucus tax extenders piece. We are supportive of all these items. In order to help the Senator from Pennsylvania, we are ready to send all of them over separately, and of course, we are ready to go forward sending them over bundled just without the necessity of a conference.

Mr. SANTORUM. I appreciate the suggestion of the Senator from Nevada.

I suggest in response to that, again, this bill is the bill that has already passed the Senate. We already sent it over to the House. The House has already looked at the Senate bill and said: We have a better way. We do not want to have offsets to this bill; we do not want to have social service block grant funds; we do not want to have as generous a food donation provision. We want to have some other provisions that you do not have in this legislation. They sent it back.

Now when you have such differing viewpoints on how to solve this problem, the tradition in this body, and out of necessity, is to convene a conference and get that done. Sending different versions back and forth does not make progress and, with all due respect, I do not believe will solve the problem.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to honor the memory of Pfc. Anthony D'Agostino, of Waterbury, CT, who was killed in Iraq this past Sunday. He was just 4 days short of his 21st birthday.

Private D'Agostino was part of the U.S. Army's 16th Signal Brigade, based in Fort Hood, TX. He was one of 15 soldiers killed when a missile struck a Chinook helicopter that was carrying American troops to Baghdad International Airport for a trip home to spend 2 weeks with family and friends.

I join all of America in mourning each and every one of these brave soldiers, and in praying for the recovery of the 20 soldiers who were injured in the attack.

It's a sad fact of war that as the death toll mounts, the daily casualty reports can become almost routine. But each time I read the story of a Connecticut soldier who has perished overseas and this is the sixth such story in this war I'm reminded of how many lives are touched by every single man or woman who makes the ultimate sacrifice so that all of us can live in peace, freedom, and security.

Anthony was a true Connecticut son, spending virtually his entire life in our State. He grew up in Middlebury, attending Middlebury Elementary School and Memorial Middle School, and in 2001, he graduated from the W.F. Kaynor Regional Vocational-Technical High School, specializing in electricity. After graduating, he lived in Waterbury until he enlisted in the Army 2 years ago.

Men and women across America who make the decision to join our Armed Forces do so for a variety of reasons. For Anthony D'Agostino, it was a decision that was forged in the fire of the attacks of September 11, 2001. Like so many Americans, in the aftermath of those terrible attacks, Anthony decided that he wanted to contribute something to his country. Tragically, he and his family would ultimately make the most painful contribution of all.

Joining the Army was a homecoming of sorts for Anthony. He was born in Georgia while his father Steven was stationed at Fort Benning. And when it was time for Anthony to enter basic training 19 years later, he returned to the same base where his father once served.

Those who knew Anthony say he had a tremendous work ethic, whether that meant giving his all on high school sports teams, or mowing his grandparents' lawn with a stand-up mower. Even while he was in Iraq, he asked his family to send over Spanish books so he could use what little spare time he had to better himself. He had dreams of returning home and attending the U.S. Military Academy in West Point.

Anthony D'Agostino knew he was facing serious danger when he left for Iraq 8 months ago. But it was a danger he was prepared and proud to accept as a soldier in the United States Army.

Anthony had a sense of responsibility, dedication, and commitment well beyond his years. And Connecticut will never forget him.

My heart goes out to Anthony's father Steven, his mother Deb, his stepfather Paul, and to his entire family.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to pay tribute to a truly remarkable individual whom I have had the privilege to know and work with, U.S. Army Lt. Colonel Patrick Sargent. Pat Sargent worked in my office for a year as a Congress-

sional Fellow in 2001. He is a helicopter pilot and is currently the commander of the 421st Medical Battalion stationed in Germany. Lt. Colonel Sargent served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and is scheduled to return for a second deployment shortly.

This past August, Pat received the General Benjamin O. Davis Jr. Award by the Tuskegee Airmen Inc., an organization dedicated to preserving the amazing legacy of the World War II Tuskegee Airmen. This award is conferred annually to "a field grade officer who has exhibited outstanding performance in both professional and community service." It is the highest award given by this organization, and this year was the first time this honor has gone to an Army aviator.

Who were the Tuskegee Airmen? They were a group of American heroes who every American should know about. In recent years we have seen a surge in interest in World War II and the experiences of American servicemen who served in the worst conflict humanity has ever seen. Movies such as "Saving Private Ryan" have done much to illustrate the sacrifices of our World War II veterans, and we have begun construction of a World War II Memorial on the Mall here in Washington. All of these veterans sacrificed for the allied cause against totalitarianism.

But the Tuskegee Airmen faced an additional struggle on top of the war against the Axis Powers. They fought prejudice here at home, and they succeeded on both fronts. During World War II, the U.S. military began an experiment to determine whether African Americans were capable of successfully piloting combat aircraft. This "experiment" eventually evolved into the 332nd Fighter Group, consisting of four squadrons of fighter aircraft piloted entirely by African Americans. Under the command of then-Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, the 332nd flew 200 missions escorting U.S. bombers over Europe. It was the only U.S. fighter group of the war that never lost a bomber under its protection.

Pat Sargent is a modern-day descendant of those brave men. As I noted, he commands the 421st Medical Battalion. With 45 Black Hawk helicopters, 40 ground ambulances, 118 wheeled vehicles, and 591 personnel, it is the U.S. Army's largest medical evacuation battalion. Serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Pat became the first African American to command a medical evacuation battalion in combat in our Nation's history. The motto of the 421st is "Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime." It is only three words in length, but it is telling nonetheless. The battalion's men and women are deployed to sites across the globe, including the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa. They perform medical evacuations not only for American soldiers but for allied troops, wounded enemy soldiers that have been taken prisoner, and injured civilians. In Iraq, helicopters